



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/764,558	01/18/2001	Vincent P. Annunziata	03169- P0003B	6841
24126	7590	06/07/2006		
ST. ONGE STEWARD JOHNSTON & REENS, LLC 986 BEDFORD STREET STAMFORD, CT 06905-5619			EXAMINER KYLE, CHARLES R	
			ART UNIT 3624	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 06/07/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	09/764,558	ANNUNZIATA, VINCENT P.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Charles Kyle	3624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

**Claims 1-5, 9-12, 15, 24-25** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,418,419 *Nieboer et al* in view of US 5,136,501 *Silverman et al* and further in view of US 4,266,775 *Chitnis et al*.

**With respect to Claim 1**, *Nieboer* discloses the information substantially as claimed, including in a system for trading of commodities (Col. 20, line 58 to Col. 21, line 29) elements of:

a computer accessible by a plurality of traders over a computer network (Col. 5, lines 16-62);

a database accessible by said computer containing a plurality of indications submitted by traders of the system to said computer over said computer network, wherein each of said plurality of indications relates to a bid or offer for a specified number of units of a specified commodity at a specified unit price (Fig. 8, Col. 11, line 63 to Col. 12, line 42);

an indication selected from said plurality of indications submitted by a trader to said computer over said computer network (Col. 12, lines 4-7, selected existing order from order book and submission to negotiate) ; and

software preparing reports of executed orders (Fig. 9; Col. 12, lines 47-55).

*Nieboer* does not specifically disclose a database accessible by a computer containing a plurality of trader files associated with a plurality of traders of the system wherein each of said plurality of trader files contains a portfolio containing a score associated with a specific trader and related portfolio manipulations during trading. Official Notice is taken that it was old and well known to maintain records of trader holdings, (i.e., a portfolio), and to manipulate them in the claimed ways. For example, such a portfolio-of commodity holdings would be necessary for a trader/player to know what his/her assets were. Retrieval and updating of a portfolio were old and well known portfolio accounting processes. Further, the accumulated portfolio value would constitute a score, as money can be considered the ultimate score-keeping device. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Nieboer* with these old and well known portfolio management and valuation processes to provide timely, accessible records of trader/player holdings. See also *Chitnis* at Abstract where a winner is determined based on highest money score.

*Nieboer*, while disclosing preparing reports of executed orders which are of necessity prepared after the bookkeeping functions recited by the last phrase of Claim 1, does not specifically disclose the steps of these functions. *Silverman* discloses them as follows:

receiving said selected indication from the trader (Background Art), updating said listing of commodities and units thereof in said retrieved player portfolio to reflect said selected indication (Fig. 17, 139.19 Bid for 10.0 units matched to 139.19 Offered as 6.0 and 3.0 units ), updating said money value in said retrieved trader portfolio to reflect said selected indication, and removing the selected indication from said indication database (Fig. 18, previously Bid and Offers removed; 1.0 units leaves at 139.19).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in that art at the time of the invention to include the bookkeeping functions disclosed by *Silverman* in the system of *Nieboer* because this would provide detailed transaction information for executed orders.

While commodities trading is recognized to be a competitive "game", *Nieboer* does not specifically disclose that his trading is a game. *Chitnis* discloses that such trading is presented in the form of a game at Abstract, at least. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the trading disclosed by *Nieboer* to be in a game format because this would make an educational presentation for persons learning trading. See *Chitnis* at Col. 1, lines 7-10.

**With respect to Claims 2 and 3**, Official Notice is taken that it recites old and well known elements of games rules, scoring and termination. For example, some form or scoring is essential to any game; winner determination and game and are likewise essential. In the particular environment of a trading game, the use of an accumulated portfolio valuation would be analogous to accumulated cash in a game such as Monopoly TM. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Nieboer* to include such game functions to facilitate the practice of trading as a game.

**Concerning Claim 4**, *Chitnis* discloses a preset time period at Abstract. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify a game based on the trading of *Nieboer* to have a predetermined end point as in *Chitnis* because this would increase trading intensity for traders/players.

**With respect to Claim 5**, *Nieboer* does not determine a predetermined trader/player score to end trading. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that he who dies with the most money wins. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify a game like instantiation of *Nieboer* to end at a particular score, such as money, because this provides a known and convenient metric for identifying a winner.

**With respect to Claim 9**, *Silverman* discloses order (bid/offer) entry at Col. 7, lines 2-13 and confirmation of sufficient financial resources at Col. 18, line 10 to Col. 19, line 68. Some type of form is inherent to computer data entry.

**Concerning Claim 10**, see the discussion of Claim 9. Official Notice is taken that it was old and well known to verify that a trading party had sufficient commodity units to sell in a way analogous to verifying sufficient funds to buy, as is the discussion of Claim 9. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide such verification in *Silverman* to assure that a party had sufficient units to sell for a particular transaction.

**With respect to Claim 11**, *Silverman* discloses rejection of an indication violating rules at Col. 17, lines 7-18.

**Concerning Claim 12**, *Silverman* discloses transmission and presentation of indications at Col. 2, lines 18-63.

**With respect to Claim 15**, *Silverman* discloses content selection corresponding to indications and receiving these at Col. 6, line 22 to Col. 8, line 30.

**As to Claim 24**, see the discussion of Claim 1, of which Claim 24 is a subset. Further, Official Notice is taken that identification of traders/players was old and well known at the time of the invention. This constitutes a difference from the prior art, not an incompatibility. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in that art at the time of the invention to modify *Nieboer* to identify trader/players so as to enhance player knowledge of the trading market.

**Concerning Claim 25**, a pre-defined lot size would be the limit of specific commodity available for trading in the game, i.e., a lot size can be no larger than the amount of commodity set at the beginning of the game.

**Claims 6-8** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,418,419 *Nieboer et al* in view of US 5,136,501 *Silverman et al* and US 4,266,775 *Chitnis et al* and further in view of *Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms*, hereinafter *Dictionary*.

**With respect to Claim 6**, *Nieboer* discloses the invention substantially as claimed. See the discussion of Claim 2. *Nieboer* does not specifically disclose beginning trading with predetermined limitations on a trader/player's open position. *Dictionary* discloses such

limitations at pages 456-457, "Position Limit." It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify a game like instantiation of *Nieboer* to include the position limitations of *Dictionary* because this would provide an accurate representation of regulations affecting trading in real commodities markets. *Chitnis* discloses beginning with an empty portfolio at Col. 3, lines 28-37.

**With respect to Claim 7**, see the discussion of Claim 6. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to make limitations effective at game end to assure that a player's final position complied with those limitations.

**With respect to Claim 8**, as cited above *Chitnis* allows players to begin with cash; commodities in *Chitnis* are predetermined to be zero, a trivial case, which nonetheless meets the limitation.

**Claims 13-14** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,418,419 *Nieboer et al* in view of US 5,136,501 *Silverman et al* and US 4,266,775 *Chitnis et al* and further in view of US 4,677,552 *Sibley, Jr.*

**As to Claims 13 and 14**, *Nieboer* discloses the invention substantially as claimed. See the discussion of Claim 2. *Nieboer* does not specifically disclose formatting and sorting of a presentation (display). *Sibley, Jr.* discloses these limitations at Col. 10, lines 42-66. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify

*Nieboer* with the formatting and sorting of a presentation (display) of *Sibley, Jr.* because this would allow a trader/player to design a display most accessible to him.

**Claims 16-17** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,418,419 *Nieboer et al* in view of US 5,136,501 *Silverman et al* and US 4,266,775 *Chitnis et al* and further in view of US 6,745,236 *Hawkins et al*.

**As to Claim 16**, *Nieboer* discloses the invention substantially as claimed. See the discussion of Claim 1. *Nieboer* does not specifically disclose details of trader/player registration. *Hawkins* discloses registration forms at Col. 17, lines 25-31. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Nieboer* to have registration forms and' function to control access to a trading game..

**As to Claim 17**, *Nieboer* discloses the invention substantially as claimed. See the discussion of Claim 1. *Nieboer* does not specifically disclose playing a game on the Internet. *Hawkins* discloses this limitation at Background of the Invention. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Nieboer* to function on the Internet because this would provide a broad accessible playing area for trader/players.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed April 3, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's arguments follow two lines. At pages 13-14, Applicant argues against *Nieboer*, stating that the reference discloses automatic execution, implying that it does not disclose and is incompatible with submission of indications (bids or offers) by player/traders. Applicant fails to note that *Nieboer* is a modification of traditional trading systems, as shown at the Background of the Invention and Col. 2, lines 18-21, at least, which clearly discloses submission of indications (bids or offers) by player/traders. Additionally, *Chitnis*, which was cited in combination with *Nieboer*, also clearly discloses such submissions by a player at Summary of the Invention. The trader/player is clearly identified.

Applicant's argument seems to suggest that the invention of *Nieboer* was made in isolation from the remainder of trading arts. While elements of *Nieboer* do disclose automatic order placement, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize its disclosure of manual function as well, thus allowing modification by the secondary references. Applicant cites only limited portions of the primary reference to present arguments, but the prior art record must be appreciated in its entirety. The combination of references discloses Applicant's claimed invention, as set forth above.

Applicant's second line of argument, at pages 15-17, parallels that discussed above. In this second argument, Applicant argues limited portions of *Nieboer*, stating that the reference indications are anonymous, and that *Nieboer* does not disclose identification of indications with a player/trader. Again, *Nieboer* discloses this limitation at Background of the Invention. *Chitnis* likewise discloses identification of player/traders, as its invention is in the form of a board game. Additionally, the negotiation disclosed by *Nieboer* clearly suggests

Art Unit: 3624

that traders be identified; why would one negotiate with a counter-party whom he/she did not know?

The rejections are maintained.

### ***Conclusion***

**THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

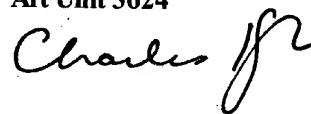
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Charles Kyle whose telephone number is (571) 272-6746. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30 to 3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on (571) 272-6747. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

crk  
June 1, 2006

**Primary Examiner**  
**Charles Kyle**  
**Art Unit 3624**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Kyle", with a stylized flourish at the end.